

Social Education v. 63 no. 6 (October 1999)
Special issue on authentic assessment in social studies

***Authentic assessment in social studies* by P. Nickell**

Abstract: Articles discuss multiple types of assessment; the misuse of student test scores in evaluating teachers; the need to adopt, adapt, and refine assessment practices; teaching and assessment in a standards-based classroom; student self-assessment; a social advocacy course and the assessment of its students; observation as an assessment tool; the reduction of subjectivity in scoring classroom assessments; Michigan's statewide assessments and content standards; the Comprehensive Social Studies Assessment Project; Internet use in the Maryland State Performance Assessment program; influences on student performance on an authentic assessment task; theme-based portfolio assessment in social studies teacher education; assessment and certification of teachers; and students' engagement with the Web-based Quest program and teachers' assessment of them.

***Multiple choice to multiple rubrics: one teacher's journey in assessment* by Michael Yell**

Abstract: Junior high school social studies teachers can use multiple types of assessment in measuring their students' intellectual work. They can employ performance-based assessment that focuses on formal and creative written work and the creation of a rubric, on individual and group project work, on quizzes and tests, and on differentiation. In expanding their assessment, teachers should begin by examining their current assessment, develop and expand their use of rubrics, and search out staff development opportunities and professional readings on assessment.

***The changing nature and purpose of assessment in the social studies classroom* by Alleman, J.; Brophy, J.**

Abstract: Social studies teachers should adopt, adapt, and refine assessment practices that can improve teaching and learning. In using a constructivist approach in assessment, teachers must ensure that students collaborate thoughtfully as they attempt to construct new understandings and must effectively measure individual effort as each student builds a unique representation of what is constructed in a group setting. Teachers must also ensure that the tools of alternative assessment are aligned with social education goals. Guiding principles for creating, monitoring, and implementing alternative assessment in the classroom are presented.

***Opening assessment to our students* by Hart, Diane**

Abstract: Teachers can use a range of tools to encourage student self-assessment. The simplest of these tools are evaluative questions, which encourage students to think about their work and growth as learners and have the potential to foster metacognition. Other tools include self-evaluation forms, checklists, and rubrics and emphasize the standards by which teachers want students to judge their own performance. Examples of evaluative questions and self-evaluation forms are presented.

***Evaluating students in a course on social advocacy* by Wysocki, Barbara L.**

Abstract: Students in a high school service learning course learned about the history, theory, and practice of social advocacy and were assessed through the use of multiple measures. The course introduced students to volunteering, supported and affirmed students, and involved teacher volunteering. The intellectual understandings and character growth that students in the course were meant to achieve were assessed by measuring class participation, journal writing, volunteer experience, and written assignments. A detailed description of the project is presented.

Observation as an assessment tool by Nickell, P; Wilson, A; Hopkins

Abstract: Advice for teachers on using observation as an assessment tool is presented. Teachers should develop an observation instrument that can be used repeatedly, ensure that all students are observed at certain intervals, ensure that not too many scoring criteria are listed, and follow observation with conferencing. A sample observation form is presented.

The issue of subjectivity in authentic social studies assessment Nickell, P

Abstract: Teachers can reduce subjectivity in scoring classroom assessments by using careful prompt development that incorporates scoring criteria. Such scoring criteria are specific expectations made clear to students in task instructions. These scoring criteria can lead to fairness in assessing authentic work because good tasks relate directly to instruction objectives and students know exactly what is expected and are less likely to misunderstand or misinterpret the task or go in an inappropriate direction. An assessment task for high school geography that incorporates at least four scoring criteria is presented, and common errors in scoring

Breaking new ground: the Comprehensive Social Studies Assessment Project by Czarra, Fred

Abstract: The Comprehensive Social Studies Assessment Project is a collaborative effort by 23 states to develop assessments in social studies. Its primary purpose is to create assessments in history, geography, civics, and economics for upper elementary, middle, and high school students. Further purposes are the creation of a professional development program and the design and implementation of a portfolio assessment system and the development of a CD-ROM aimed at teachers. An important aspect of the project is direct teacher involvement in the writing of the assessment activities.